

THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF UGANDA

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21st June 2007

Dear Rectors, Clergy, and Lay Leaders of Ugandan Churches in America,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd!

I am writing to share with you a significant decision I and the House of Bishops have made today that I hope will be an encouragement to you. And, I want you, if possible, to hear it first from me.

The Church of Uganda is now providing ecclesiastical oversight to twenty-six congregations in America, and we continue to receive appeals from other congregations. Yet, when we first started responding to such appeals in 2004, I don't think any of us imagined at the time that the American church would be in the state that it is in today, and that the tear in the Anglican Communion would or could become deeper. We always envisioned the episcopal care and oversight we were providing you and other churches as being a temporary measure. Hence, we sometimes referred to this as our "ecclesiastical refugee ministry."

Likewise, we have always said that we will be there for you and not abandon you, and we stand by that commitment and our word. At the same time, we have said that we would do everything we can to work towards a Biblically orthodox domestic ecclesial entity in the USA so that at some point in the future, we could "repatriate" you.

The carefully worked out and unanimously agreed Pastoral Scheme by the Primates in our February 2007 Dar es Salaam Communiqué has now been soundly rejected not only by TEC's House of Bishops, but also by their Executive Council. We take their rejection very seriously.

The need for a domestic episcopate for our Ugandan congregations grows daily, yet the anticipated, Biblically orthodox domestic ecclesial entity in the USA is not yet available. It has, therefore, seemed good to the House of Bishops and the Holy Spirit for us to take an interim step that acknowledges the need for a domestic bishop while at the same time affirming your full status as members of the Church of Uganda, and, therefore, of the Anglican Communion.

In December 2006, the House of Bishops elected the Rev. John Guernsey to be a Bishop in the Church of Uganda, serving our American congregations on behalf of their Ugandan Bishop. Today at our House of Bishops meeting, we reaffirmed that decision and set the date for Bishop-elect Guernsey's consecration for Sunday, 2nd September 2007. He will be consecrated in Mbarara along with Bishop-elect George Tibesigwa, the new Bishop of Ankole Diocese. You are most welcome to attend the consecration and we would be very happy to receive you.

What does this mean for you? What are the practical implications?

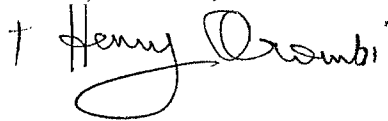
1. You and your congregation are still full members of your current Diocese in the Church of Uganda.
2. We continue to wholeheartedly encourage the development of mutual mission relationships between your congregation and your diocese. The harvest still remains plentiful, but the labourers are few.
3. At the time of the consecration, your Bishop will transfer his episcopal oversight, but not his jurisdiction, to Bishop-elect Guernsey.
4. Therefore, you should relate to Bishop-elect Guernsey as your overseeing Bishop and to your Ugandan Bishop as a Mission Partner. For example, all matters pertaining to ordinations, deployment of clergy, calling of clergy to parishes, clergy discipline, installation of new rectors, confirmation, planting of new churches, referral of churches for Ugandan oversight, etc. should now be referred directly to Bishop-elect Guernsey and no longer to your Ugandan Bishop. On the other hand, matters pertaining to your joint mission efforts should continue to be referred to your Ugandan Bishop.

Admittedly, this is complex, and we hope this arrangement will be temporary until the Biblically orthodox domestic ecclesial entity in the USA is in place. But, I do ask that all of us – Americans and Ugandans – work diligently to make this work. We will all need to walk in the light with one another; to extend grace, love, and mutual respect to one another; and to be transparent in our communication. Bishop-elect Guernsey is now our front-line Bishop and should be your first point of contact about anything ecclesiastical. When in doubt, contact Bishop-elect Guernsey first and then, together, you can decide if and how your Ugandan Bishop may need to be brought into the situation.

Finally, I want to say how pleased and encouraged I am to hear that Bishop Duncan has called for a Council of Bishops meeting for the Common Cause partners in September. This is the kind of movement toward unity among orthodox entities in the USA that is hopeful for the future of a Biblical North American Anglican witness and must be pleasing to our Lord. We have already been assured that Bishop-elect Guernsey will be invited to that meeting, and we have asked him to work closely with all Bishops serving American congregations that are canonically part of Global South Provinces, and with other Bishops with whom the Church of Uganda is in communion.

As I have said in the past, we are so grateful for you and your costly witness to the unchanging Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.” (1 Peter 5.2)

Yours, in Christ,



The Most Rev. Henry Luke Orombi
ARCHBISHOP OF CHURCH OF UGANDA.